DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 100 866 SP 008 779

AUTHOR Arends, Robert L.
TITLE A Brief Summary of Competency-Based Teacher Education.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 11p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Articulation (Program); Definitions; *Performance Based Teacher Education; *Program Design; Program Development; Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

In a competency-based teacher education (CBTE) program the competencies to be acquired by the prospective teacher and the assessment criteria for those competencies are made explicit, and the prospective teacher is held accountable for meeting those criteria. Specified competencies should be those understandings, skills, behaviors, and attitudes which facilitate the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth of children. In comparison with conventional programs, CBTE seems to offer many advantages: (a) a specific criterion level is established, and persons seeking certification must display competence at the acceptance level before certification; (b) program focus is on goals or exit characteristics rather than on means; and (c) a competency-based program is performance rather than time based. A CBTE program is based on defined instructional and expressive objectives. Instructional objectives call for demonstration of specific competency and include conditions and criteria for its demonstration, while expressive objectives call for the student to experience a specific event with specification of the outcome. CBTE lends itself to a systematic model of instruction, and many programs use the instructional module which consists of statement of objectives, prerequisites, pre- and postassessment procedures, instructional activities, and remediation activities. (A 12-item bibliography is included.) (HMD)

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A Brief Summary of Competency-Based Teacher Education

Robert L. Arends

State University College at Buffalo

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This summary had as its source: Handbook for the Development of Instructional Modules in Competency-Based Teacher Education Programs, by

Arends, Robert L.
Hasla, John A.
Weber, Wilford

Published by "The Center for the Study of Teaching"
117 Bacon Hall
1300 Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14222

and

"A Definition of Competency-Based Teacher Education" from a Conference held by AACTE Denver, Colorado, August 25-27, 1971.

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Dear Reader:

The following is a very brief description of competency-based teacher education. It contains an introduction, a comparison with the conventional program, a brief outline of the program, a description of essential, related, and associate elements, and a selected reference. The objective of this brief resume is to stimulate sufficient interest and understanding on your part to pursue further inquiry into the process culminating in an internalization of the concept with resultant attempts at developing and implementing a competency-based teacher education program.

Introduction

Teacher education is much criticized and often damned. The purpose here is not to criticize or defend but rather to take what is believed to be a valid position: Competency-based teacher education appears to hold great promise and is a notion which deserves adequate testing.

Two assumptions must be made at this time: First, that you as a person interested in education agree that present day teacher education programs leave a great deal to be desired. This is not to say that many of the developments and practices to this point are not valid and worthwhile, but that the overall affect has not been overwhelming success. Second, that you are willing to make a commitment to a process which holds a great deal of promise for the betterment of our profession.

Simply stated a competency-based teacher education program is one in which the competencies to be acquired by the prospective teacher, and

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the criteria to be applied in assessing the competencies of the prospective teacher are made explicit, and the prospective teacher is held accountable for meeting those criteria. The competencies specified should be those particular understandings, skills, behaviors, and attitudes believed to facilitate the intellectual, social emotional, and physical growth of children.

It is not being suggested that a competency-based teacher education program is the panacea which will cure all of the ills of society or even those in education. It does not guarantee that one-hundred percent of the graduates of such a program will be successful teachers. It does offer a promise that a much higher percentage of the graduates will be equipped with both the knowledge and attitudes to perform successfully in the field.

One of the most severe criticisms of a competency-based program has come from those persons who claim that such a program is dehumanizing, mechanical, and restrictive. This claim is most likely made in ignorance of the concept. In truth the program is more humanizing, and allows the participant an opportunity to both choose his method of learning, and of being responsible for the outcome.

Comparing a competency-based program with a conventional program

In comparing the two programs a competency-based approach seems to offer many advantages; chief among those are:

1. In a competency-based program the objectives, goals, and criteria are made public resulting in at least two distinct advantages.

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First, it helps the student zero in on appropriate skills to be used in teaching, and at the same time allows him to be creative in his own learning style. Second, it allows the public schools the opportunity to be selective in implementing their staff with persons who possess the qualifications which best fit their needs.

2. A specific criteria level is established and persons seeking certification must display competence at the acceptance level before they will be certified. While this will not guarantee success in the classroom the chance is much greater if it can be said that student X has demonstrated specific competencies at the cognitive and performance level in regard to the teaching of reading and its various axiomatic entitis as compared to student Y who has received some letter grade from some instructor in which the subject of reading is covered.

3. In a competency-based program the focus is on the goals or ends rather than upon the means. This results in each student being able to select those learning activities which best meet his needs. This is another way of saying "individualized instruction". The prospective teacher than is much more likely to adopt an individualized approach in his classroom if he receives his training under this method.

4. A competency-based program is performance based and not time based. That is, the successful completion of an objective or set of objectives takes the place of the traditional clock hour credit system for certification. This allows the student the opportunity to spend more time on those tasks which are most difficult for him, and to spend less time on those areas which would be repetitive.

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5. A competency-based program, because it is made public, and based upon mutually agreed upon competencies can have a single philosophical base. The one subscribed to most often is the "Diagnostic-Prescriptive-Evaluative approach".

It is felt that the characteristics and assumed advantages enumerated above are reason enough to move toward competency-based programs. Each individual will certainly internalize his own personal reasons for adopting this humane approach to education.

The Program

A competency-based teacher education program is based upon defined objectives. These objectives fall into two major catagories. "Instructional Objectives" which call for a specific competency to be demonstrated, and "Expressive Objectives" which call for a student to experience a specific event without specifying the outcome.

Instructional objectives serve two main functions; first they provide everyone concerned with the information needed to assure a well-rounded program. Second, they allow the instructor to plan specific instructional activities to meet the objective specified, and allow him the opportunity to review those activities in light of the objectives.

The instructional objective contains three elements of consideration namely, type, criteria, and condition.

Type refers to what is to be demonstrated

Criteria refers to the level of acceptance for competency

Condition refers to the circumstances under which the competency is to be demonstrated.

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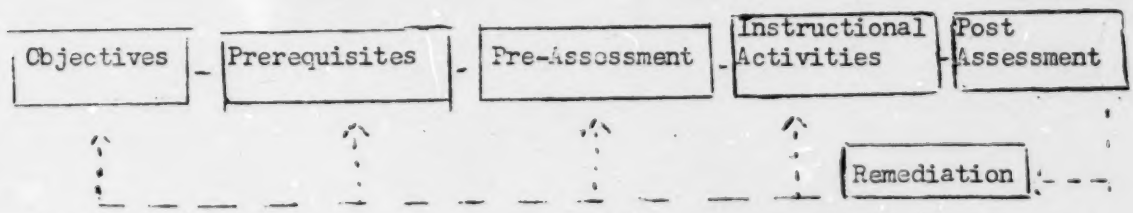
Instructional objectives can also be identified as follows:

Cognitive	Knowledge that is to be demonstrated
Affective	Attitudes that the student must display
Psychomotor	Skills that the student must demonstrate
Demonstrative	Demonstrations of performance which the student must display
Consequential	Behavioral changes in pupils that the student must be able to accomplish.

Expressive objectives are different in nature from instructional objectives in that they call for the student to undergo a specific type of experience which might or might not result in the behavioral change that is called for. An example of an expressive objective would be "the student will visit the homes of at least five of his pupils" the desired result is the development of a positive attitude toward the parents of his pupils. However, negative feelings might result if the visitations are extremely unpleasant.

A competency-based teacher education program lends itself to a systematic model of instruction. The model of instruction adopted by many competency-based programs is the "Instructional Module". The Instructional Module consists of the following facets:

A Model of Instruction



The Objective:	As briefly described in the preceeding section
Prerequisites:	Background needed to begin the Module
Pre-Assessment:	A means of determining if the Module is needed by the individual student
Instructional: Activities	Lectures, seminars, A-V materials, readings, etc. prescribed by the instructor which will enable the student to successfully complete the Module.' Instructional Activities should be optional as much as possible, and leave room for the individual student to supply his own.
Post-Assessment:	A means of determining if the student has established competence in relation to the objectives.

One will notice that the Model of Instruction or Module lends itself to a systematic program which incorporates individualization and student choice within the broader framework.

As with most innovations in education there is some confusion concerning the essential elements of a competency based program because various institutions have included differing elements in their programs. Following is an attempt to clarify this point:

Elements In A Competency-Based Program

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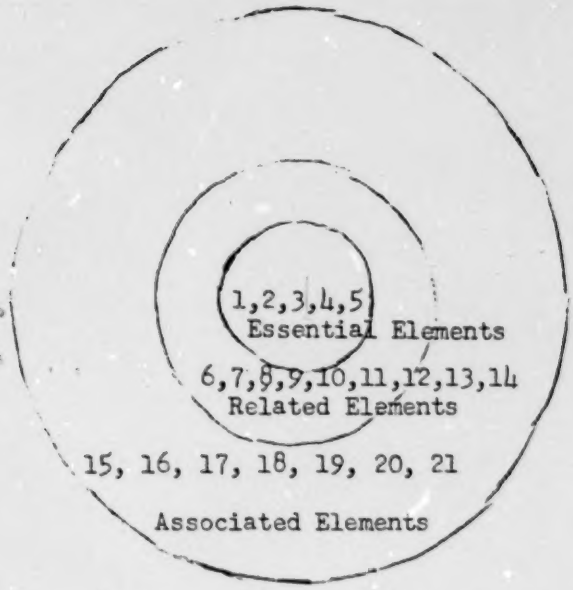

[1]From the Invitational Conference on Performance-Based Teacher Education sponsored by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Denver, Colorado, August 25-27, 1971; this should be considered a first draft as it does not represent a consensus opinion.

A DEFINITION OF COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

Essential Elements

1. Competencies (knowledge, skills, and behaviors) to be demonstrated by graduates are: (a) derived from an explicit conception of teacher roles, (b) stated so as to make possible assessment of student's behavior in relation to specified competencies, and (c) made public.

2. Criteria to be employed in assessing competencies: (a) are congruent with specified competencies, (b) make explicit expected levels of mastery under specified conditions, and (c) are made public.

3. Assessment of student's competence: (a) uses his performance as the primary source of evidence, (b) takes into account evidence of student's knowledge relevant to planning, analyzing, interpreting, or evaluating situations or behavior and (c) makes use of evidence on the consequences of student behavior (on pupils) where valid and feasible.

4. Student's progress is determined by demonstrated competence (rather than by time or course completion).

5. Instructional program is intended to facilitate the development and evaluation of the student's achievement of the competencies specified.

Related Elements

6. Emphasis on exit, not entrance requirements.

7. Achievement-based, not time-based.

8. Field-centered.

9. Personalized, individualized instruction.

10. Modularized instruction.

11. Multi-institutional pattern of organization.

12. Formative feedback to student regarding his progress.

13. Pre-service-inservice continuum.

14. Student accountability.

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Associate Elements

15. Systemic approach; regenerative, open system.

16. Internal research component.

17. Training and protocol materials.

18. Utilization of the new technology.

19. Negotiation of instructional goals by faculty and students.

20. Both faculty and students are designers of instructional system.

21. The role of the teacher is viewed as an enabler of learning.

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